

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIAL PROGRESS

MAN is a gregarious animal and it is then in the herd rather than in the family that we should search for the foundations of our social fabric. We may perhaps discover some of its primeval features in the behaviour of a troop of monkeys. Amongst them there is neither marriage nor private property ; all things are in common. save for the interference of superior strength or courage. These qualities are respected. as also is age. There is generally a leader of the troop who must be strong and courageous : he must also. it seems. be old. and he is generally ill-tempered.

The first beginnings of exclusiveness were due. we may believe, to the predilections of woman. who, naturally disliking to be at any man's disposal, reserved her attractions to certain members of the herd. This introduces us to the custom of polyandry. which is still a living force in some respectable communities : it has. for instance, maintained itself amongst certain peoples of India and Tibet. Woman took a further step when. following the dictates of her heart. she denied herself to more than one man. whom she accepted, more as her custom-ary lover than as her legal husband. Amongst a very intelligent tribe of Assam. marriage is still in this embryonic stage. A man does not